

Article

Development of Emotional Competencies as a Teaching Innovation for Higher Education Students of Physical Education

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Abstract: The objective of the work presented is to develop emotional competencies in higher-education students by following Bisquerra’s five-block model. With the methodological support of adventure pedagogy and gamification, students improve their emotional competencies, as well as the basic competencies of the degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences and the specific ones of the subject. The proposal, which is entitled “In search of my Avatar”, aims to make sure that, in their future as sports professionals, they will be able to serve their customers in a fully competent way. The work presented proposes different activities of emotional education to work transversally in higher education, ranging from conflict management and the use of language to improve the relationship with oneself and with others. The proposal was developed for the Degree in Sports Science and for the subject of Physical Activity and Sport in the Natural Environment, but with certain adaptations, it could be transferred to any university-degree subject.

Keywords: emotional competencies; higher education; sport; physical education; gamification



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1. Introduction

The education system in higher education should be oriented toward the full development of the students in their cognitive, behavioral and emotional facets and enable them in any performance context. This means that cognitive development should be addressed, as well as the emotional development that should complement it. Various studies [1–3] show that emotional illiteracy has highly negative effects on individuals and society, leading to anxiety, stress, depression, drug use or abuse, violence, etc.

Acquiring emotional competencies improves social and interpersonal relationships, helps to resolve conflicts and favors physical and mental health [4,5]. For this reason, the development of these competencies in future graduates in physical activity and sport sciences is essential due to the experience that clients have when carrying out this type of activity (fears, frustration, leaving their comfort zone, abandonment of physical activity practice, worsening of their physical health status, etc.) [6,7].

The boom in the last few years of physical activities in the natural environment is reflected in the number of participants in this type of activity. Universities have started to include it in their programs. Its practice is becoming increasingly widespread in social-education projects and as therapy for employees in large companies. Due to the lack of training in emotional competencies, there is a need to promote it [8].

This program seeks a more integrated training for the acquisition of an assertive and empathic approach when accompanying the user to carry out this type of practice.

The work aims to develop emotional competencies in university students in order to improve their personal and professional performance by using transversal activities based

on Bisquerra's five-block model [9]: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, social competency and competencies for life and well-being.

1.1. Emotional Education, Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Competencies

Emotional education (EE) is currently beginning to be in great demand. The current educational systems contemplate a comprehensive education of the student, and for this reason, it is not only necessary to develop the cognitive level [5]. Our education system focuses on intellectual development, leaving emotional development in the background. The latter is the basis of social relations, developing the interpersonal relationship (between people) and the intrapersonal relationship (with oneself). This type of education, which could be worked on in a transversal way, together with other areas, helps to achieve a complete level of education for pupils (physical, intellectual, moral, social and emotional development) and is a form of prevention for a wide variety of situations, such as drug use, prevention of stress, anxiety, depression, violence, etc., with the result of improving, at the same time, academic results [10].

There are solid theoretical foundations for the importance of emotional education that are constantly being reviewed and updated [9,11–13]. These authors agree that specific emotional competencies can be acquired and included from an early age.

However, before going into depth, we need to clarify the difference between emotional education (EE), emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional competency (EC). From our point of view, some concepts encompass the other, similar to matryoshka dolls: EI encompasses EE, and EE encompasses EC, so we are going to start by developing emotional intelligence.

Darwin's concept of EI began to be developed in his works on survival and adaptation [14]. Later, in 1920, Thorndike used this term, calling it social intelligence and defining it as the ability to motivate and understand people [15]. Howard Gardner argued that intelligence quotient (IQ) was not sufficient to explain cognitive ability, so he investigated other types of intelligence. In 1983, he published his Theory of Multiple Intelligences [11], where he introduced two fundamental ideas for EI: interpersonal intelligence (understanding others) and intrapersonal intelligence (understanding oneself). More recent authors, such as Salovey Mayer, established that, regardless of your job, social rank or occupation, the determining factor is neither IQ nor the university diplomas you have achieved [12], but EI.

Following this review of the history of EI, Taramuel defines it as the ability to reach out to and manage people and act consciously in relationships with human beings [16]. This definition is based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences [11] and does not understand EI without intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence and is completed with the following definition [17]: "the ability to recognize, understand, and use emotional information about oneself that leads to or causes effective or superior performance" [17] (p. 757).

In order to achieve this capacity, as Taramuel comments, we have to teach EI with a solid foundation: emotional education. EI is a permanent educational process that seeks to develop knowledge about one's own emotions and those of others [18] in order to enable the individual to develop as a human being. As indicated above, this education comes as a response to a social need. Emotional difficulties, or emotional illiteracy, can lead to anxiety, stress, depression, drug use, violence, eating disorders, etc. Therefore, the most appropriate methodology for this type of education is an eminently practical one, using dynamics, self-reflection, games, introspection, relaxation, etc. [19,20]. Therefore, this proposal is based on two types of methodology with these characteristics: adventure pedagogy (AP) and gamification.

Completing Bisquerra's definition [18], the EE is an educational process that seeks to know one's own emotions and those of others, practically, with the development of EC. This type of competency should be understood as a basic competency for life that is essential for the integral development of the personality [21]. EC can be defined as the capacity to adequately mobilize the knowledge, abilities skills and attitudes necessary to achieve an optimal level of integral development as a human being.

Finally, we propose our definition that encompasses the three concepts mentioned above, which would be the following: emotional education (EE) is an educational process that aims to develop EC in participants to improve their EI.

1.2. Emotional Competencies (ECs)

The concept of competency has had its difficulties in being defined. A large body of research defines it as a set of knowledge, skills and aptitudes necessary to exercise a profession, to solve problems autonomously and flexibly and to be able to collaborate with the professional environment and in the organization of work [22]. Colman, for its part, defines it as follows: “The capacity, skill, or ability to do something correctly or efficiently, or the scope of a person’s or a group’s ability or knowledge” [23] (p. 149). These last two examples refer more to professional competencies, but the concept has evolved toward a more comprehensive vision in recent years. Bisquerra [9] defines them as the ability to adequately mobilize the set of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes necessary to carry out different activities with a certain level of quality and efficiency.

Within this concept of competencies, there are different types, but there are a series of characteristics common to them [9]:

- They apply to people.
- They involve knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors integrated.
- They include informal and procedural capacities, as well as formal ones.
- They are inseparable from the notion of development and continuous learning linked to experience.
- They constitute capital or potential for activities linked to the capacity to mobilize or take action.

When it comes to organizing competencies, various authors [22,24] classify them in two dimensions, technical–professional development competencies and socio-personal development competencies, which is where emotional competencies would be included. According to different studies, socio-personal competencies have been gaining importance in recent decades [25,26]. Emotional management is relevant to work and leadership; employees tend to prefer optimistic and enthusiastic leadership rather than domineering and cold leadership. This applies in the same way in the classroom: academic knowledge is best learned if students are motivated, have impulse control, initiative and responsibility. The development of EC should be integrated in a cross-cutting manner in the curriculum of all curricula.

The definition of emotional competency has also been treated similarly by several authors. Salovey and Sluyter [27] identify five dimensions, namely cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control; and Goleman et al. [24] grouped the previous five into four, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. After our review of the literature, we see that the most precise definition of what we want to do in our proposal is that proposed by Bisquerra [9], as a set of knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes necessary to understand, express and regulate emotional phenomena appropriately.

The most widely accepted theory and the theoretical model used in this study is that of Bisquerra and Escoda [28], in which emotional competencies can be grouped into five blocks:

1. Emotional awareness: becoming aware of your own emotions and correctly perceiving the emotions of others.
 - a. Awareness of one’s own emotions: identifying one’s own emotions and knowing how to label them. Becoming aware of the possibility of experiencing multiple emotions and the inability to bind the mind in the present by wandering between thoughts.
 - b. Naming emotions: effectiveness in the appropriate use of the concept of emotions in our cultural context.

- c. Understanding the emotions of others: acting empathetically toward the emotions of others. The use of verbal and non-verbal language gives meaning to your emotional state following cultural consensus.
 2. Emotional regulation: ability to recognize your own emotions and manage them appropriately. It is necessary to know the difference between emotion, cognition and behavior and to have tools for coping and generating positive emotions.
 - a. Become aware of the interaction between emotion, cognition and behavior: Emotional state influences behavior and behavior influences emotion again; behavior and emotion can be regulated by cognition.
 - b. Emotional expression: ability to understand that the internal emotional state does not have to be the same as that shown in oneself and others.
 - c. Emotional regulation: in certain situations, emotions must be regulated: regulation of impulsivity, frustration tolerance, and perseverance in achieving goals.
 - d. Coping skills: the use of tools to manage emotions and self-regulate.
 - e. Competency to self-generate positive emotions: tools to voluntarily and consciously generate positive emotions and enjoy life. Seeking a better quality of life.
 3. Emotional autonomy: set of characteristics and elements related to personal self-management, such as self-esteem, positive attitude toward life, responsibility, ability to critically analyze social norms, ability to seek help and resources when needed and self-efficacy beliefs.
 - a. Self-esteem: building a positive self-image and having a healthy relationship with oneself.
 - b. Self-motivation: one's ability to generate motivation for various activities in one's personal, social and professional/academic life domains.
 - c. Positive attitude: empowering oneself and feeling optimistic about life and the challenges one faces.
 - d. Responsibility: taking responsibility for decision-making, not relegating it to external aspects and taking control of your life.
 - e. Emotional self-efficacy: acceptance of one's emotions, according to one's beliefs and experience. Embrace your own emotional world.
 - f. Critical analysis of social norms: having a critical view of social messages and personal behavior.
 - g. Resilience: coping with adverse situations while continuing with your life purpose.
 4. Social competency: ability to maintain good relationships with other people. Mastering basic social skills, effective communication, respect for others and affective pro-social behavior.
 - a. Mastering basic social skills: acting according to social norms: greeting, thanking, asking for a favor, apologizing, active listening, etc.
 - b. Respect for others: accepting and appreciating differences between equals and valuing the rights of all people.
 - c. Practicing receptive communication: attending to others with both non-verbal language and with verbal language.
 - d. Practicing expressive communication: initiating and maintaining conversations, expressing one's feelings and thoughts clearly and using verbal and non-verbal language.
 - e. Sharing emotions: an awareness that social relationships are based on an exchange of emotional intentions.
 - f. Pro-social behavior and cooperation: taking turns with an attitude of respect and kindness.
 - g. Assertiveness: defending and expressing one's rights, opinions and feelings with a balanced behavior between aggressiveness and passivity.

- h. Conflict prevention and resolution: identify, anticipate and deal resolutely with social conflicts and interpersonal problems. Tackling conflicts with a proactive and positive attitude.
 - i. Ability to manage emotional situations: to deal with emotional situations in others.
5. Competencies for life and well-being: Ability to adopt appropriate and responsible behaviors to cope successfully with life's daily challenges. Achieving a healthy and balanced life.
- a. Set adaptive goals: have realistic and positive goals.
 - b. Decision-making: taking responsibility for personal, family, academic, professional, etc. decisions.
 - c. Seeking help and resources: identifying one's need for support and assistance and knowing how to access appropriate tools.
 - d. Active, civic, responsible, critical and committed citizenship: participation in society on the basis of one's rights.
 - e. Subjective well-being: consciously enjoying your well-being and trying to transmit it to the people with whom you interact.
 - f. Flow: generating optimal experiences in professional, personal and social life.

This model is considered an EI model because it incorporates cognitive traits and psychological dimensions. Compared to other models, it has the advantage of being broader [29] and more hierarchically structured [30], making it easier to develop in intervention programs.

Through a series of experiential and practical dynamics, the intervention program offers specific dynamics for each of the five emotion competencies of the model (Table 1):

Table 1. Classification of activities.

1.	Emotional awareness	Broaden their emotional vocabulary Learn to recognize their own emotions
2.	Emotional regulation	Learn mindfulness and relaxation techniques (Mindfulness)
3.	Emotional autonomy	Recognize their own qualities and traits Use their qualities to their own advantage
4.	Social competency	Recognize the emotions of others Express their emotions in socially appropriate ways
5.	Competencies for life and well-being	Learn to be critical and reflective

1.3. Teaching Models Based on Gamification and AP

The Bologna Process of Transformation of the European Higher Education Area has meant a transformation for university education: while, in traditional education, the educational model was focused on teaching, now it is intended, above all, to focus on learning, thus putting the focus on students and teaching them to learn. To this end, the projects aim to provide students with the tools to become the protagonists of their own learning [31], so choosing a type of learning based on the acquisition of competencies is mandatory. It requires a methodology that encourages student reflection, such as active methodologies, e.g., AP or gamification. Gamification is "a set of activities and processes to solve problems by using or applying the characteristics of game elements" [32] (pp. 27–28). AP seeks to enhance us personally and socially, using adventure sports as a main tool. These adventure sports come with a large number of sensations that can benefit the practitioner. By immersing ourselves in the different assimilation processes and reflecting on what has happened, we can achieve these personal growth benefits [33]. Adventure activities present a series of very beneficial characteristics for people: loss of the limits of action, various approaches or work in the natural environment. These adventure activities are beginning

to democratize and are experiencing a significant increase in participation, which is a need in the current state of education [34]. These activities, full of sensations, can be used as a work of assimilation and reflection in order to promote personal growth. The balance between the need for technical knowledge and sensations of this activity is essential.

It is critical to delve into fundamental pedagogical structures that support their implementation, their systematization, their timing and subsequent evaluation that allow us to get the most out of them and that enable the people who carry them out to control the reins of their lives [33]; when these structures are based on gamification, motivation increases and academic performance improves [35].

Parra [33] cites the main characteristics for which AP should be developed during physical-education classes:

- Physical education should be worked on as personal growth from the corporal aspect. We use adventure activities and innovative alternative proposals as tools, which provide the emotional background, using environments, spaces, materials and proposals that invite learning and participation, generating individual and collective challenge activities in which there are interrelation and cooperation.
- Working for personal growth implies humanizing approaches, based on the human components of people. A comprehensive work of the individual, intellectual, emotional and sentimental aspects.
- The ideal conditions are created for the participants to trust, be more supportive, be more autonomous, be more respectful of the environment and be more intelligent when making decisions about their health and well-being
- The starting point is a practical experience that leads to a process of assimilation and reflection on what has happened. Reflections and evaluations make it possible to become aware of behavioral patterns, personal attitudes and ways of carrying out tasks.

Adventure in any of its facets implies entering into territories of the unknown, and this immediately captivates the students and the teacher, bringing together different achievements and experiences, generating common spaces for leisure and fun [36].

Adventure activities will serve as a tool to form people in an integral way, educating them in different values:

1. Ethical values: equality, peace, happiness, generosity, etc. Respect for oneself and others, etc.
2. Intellectual values: wisdom, self-reflection, the value of habit, discipline, etc.
3. Self-knowledge values: emotional autonomy, leaving one's comfort zone, responsibility, self-esteem, fears, capacity for effort and decision, etc.
4. Socialization values: tolerance, coexistence, respect, cooperation, etc.
5. Aesthetic and strong values: quality of life, sustainability, joie de vivre, etc.

To conclude, the purpose of these two types of methodologies lies in using the potential they offer to solve many of the concerns of the current educational and social environment, e.g., emotional illiteracy. There is an initial state and a final state; therefore, what matters is the process and not the result. The reflections that each person takes away have a transference to other vital aspects.

1.4. Emotional Competencies in the Subject of Physical Activity and Sport in the Natural Environment

Regardless of the purpose, the environment in which they are carried out or the practitioner's profile, physical activities in the natural environment present common factors that define them and give them their special and genuine character, which differentiate them from the other physical activities. The main characteristics that provide an educational component to them [37] are as follows:

1. The social character.
2. Interaction with the natural environment as a medium.

3. Managing uncertainty.
4. Assumption of risks.
5. Experiential character.
6. Motor skills as a vehicle for interaction.
7. High emotional involvement.

These defining characteristics make sure that EC can be used in multiple situations during the activity: effective and affective communication, conflict resolution, decision-making, leaving the comfort zone and frustration management. All of this enables greater emotional well-being, which results in greater personal well-being.

Within these hypothetical scenes, we here develop some of the most frequent that we can find in this type of activity: leaving the comfort zone, frustration and conflicts.

1.4.1. Comfort Zone

The comfort zone is a metaphorical zone where you are when you move into an environment you master. Skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors are familiar and comfortable [38]. Some theories explain that around, not inside, the comfort zone is the learning zone [39,40]; this is the zone where one goes out to expand one's knowledge of the world, to enrich one's points of view, to modify one's habits and to have new sensations. It is the zone where you experiment, compare and learn. Some people are afraid of this zone and therefore do not leave their comfort zone.

Beyond the zone is the panic zone. This zone can be seen as a dangerous zone, as a zone of significant challenges, the zone you do not know yet because you have not been there. By going out into this zone, your comfort zone does not disappear; instead, your comfort zone and your learning zone increase as a result. The most significant learning occurs in the process between the comfort zone and the panic zone.

When you step out of your comfort zone, two opposing forces are pulling you: emotional and creative. The former will pull you into your comfort zone, and the latter will move you outward. In order to move forward you will have to get your motivation to win out over your fears. At this point, the idea is to work on the emotional tension and especially the fears that cause you to move out of your comfort zone. By managing fears correctly, self-esteem grows, and this gives a new vision of reality full of opportunities, thus making the goal clearer [40].

1.4.2. Frustration

To develop the theme of frustration, we here rely on the theory of the frustration schema [41]. According to this theory, frustration appears when there is a need that I intend to satisfy and I do not achieve it, even when this has to do with anecdotal external factors, such as the bureaucracy of the system itself, earning little money, etc. [42]. These needs that all people have are included in Maslow's pyramid of needs [43]: self-fulfillment, esteem and recognition, social, security, physiological and physiological. However, once we know our needs, why do we keep getting frustrated?

There are different reasons why we are not aware of our needs [44–46]:

1. Stress: We live in a stressful situation. We are preoccupied with the urgent and do not pay attention to what is essential. By living in this way, we are not in touch with ourselves, with what matters. We do not have time to reflect, but only to take action.

2. We do not listen to our body: The psychophysiological system of the human body is prepared to send signals denoting the needs it has to face. Needs start with a bodily sensation (my throat is starting to dry up because I am thirsty). If we are not attentive to our body, we do not attend to that sensation, so we do not attend to the need (drinking water).

3. We do not live in the present: Our mind is constantly wandering between the past and the future, thinking about how it acted and how it will act on certain occasions. If we are not in the here and now, we will not know what we need at this moment. This is why

practices such as meditation or mindfulness are so important to train our mind in living in the present.

4. We are more concerned with the needs of others: We tend to focus more on what the other person needs than on ourselves. This comes from the need for approval; affection is prostituted. We put aside our own needs in order to attend only to our need for approval.

5. Low self-esteem: When we think this way about ourselves, we put aside our needs, thinking that we are not going to achieve or satisfy them.

6. Conflict avoidance: We forget about our needs to avoid getting into an argument. We become conformists in order not to enter into a conflict. In this way, we avoid conflict in the short-term, but we will have it by not attending to our needs in the long-term.

Once we know the causes that make our needs not be met and the causes that make us get frustrated, we can work on what to do with that frustration. There are two different ways to use the energy needed to manage frustration. We can give it a healthy or a violent outlet [47]. The violent way out would be to transform that frustration into aggression, anger, rage, etc. This feeling can be taken outward or inward [47]:

Outward aggression: We blame everything external to us, we protest, we have tantrums, physical violence.

Inward aggression: We hold ourselves responsible, go unnoticed, have low self-esteem, insecurity, disorders, feelings of guilt, anxiety.

The healthy way out of this frustration would be to use that energy in the form of assertiveness. Instead of projecting violence outward or inward, we address our needs and become aware of generating this frustration.

Once we have recognized that need, we can meet it at the exact moment, if possible. If it cannot be solved at that moment, there are two defense mechanisms in our mind: substitution and postponement.

1.4.3. Conflicts

We will talk about communication styles to direct conflicts toward a healthy outcome. To do so, we will use the Communicator Style Measure (CSM) [48–50] designed to establish different types of communication. The CSM from the perspective of those who write can be classified into three types of communication: functional, neutral and dysfunctional.

Dysfunctional communication is communication that does not allow the other person to express him/herself. This usually leads to an uncomfortable conflict, as it does not allow the sender's need to be expressed adequately, nor the receiver's need to understand it. There are several types of dysfunctional communication; we are going to see them with different examples:

1. Dramatic: I take things personally and am very vocal in making things known.
2. Dominant: I want my opinion to be superimposed on others.
3. Contentious: When I argue with someone, I try to be right in any case.

Neutral communication, on the other hand, affects neither negatively nor positively the relationship between the speakers; only the objective with which it is carried out will determine whether the communication obtained is positive or negative. Examples of this are as follows. Impression Leaving: When I communicate with a person, I usually leave positive or negative impressions. Precise: I try to keep communication within specific parameters and always deal with the same subject to disperse us. Functional communication allows the expression of both parties and assertive and empathic communication, respecting turns of words and feelings. The bases to achieve this type of communication are as follows:

1. Animated: When I speak, I usually communicate with energy, and my eyes express what I say.
2. Attentive: I listen attentively to what the other person is saying.
3. Friendly: I tend to express admiration in a loud voice for what the other person is saying.
4. Open: When communicating with another person, I like to respond openly and honestly, even revealing personal aspects.

5. Relaxed: Even under pressure, I tend to be quite relaxed when communicating with other people.

In our case, in Physical Activity and Sport in the Natural Environment, we will adapt these functional communication bases of functional communication. The professional must inspire and foster a climate of trust and calmness to solve stressful situations with the client.

This study's aim was to create a didactic proposal based on gamification and Bisquerra's five-block model [9] to improve the emotional competencies of students of Physical Activity and Sport in the Natural Environment (Degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences, University of Seville).

2. Materials and Methods

Different sources were used in order to make this proposal scientifically consistent. In this way, the bibliographic review was carried out to obtain a quality scientific bibliography with which to approach our own work, and on the other hand, expert opinion was also sought through convenience sampling [51] (please see Figure 1).

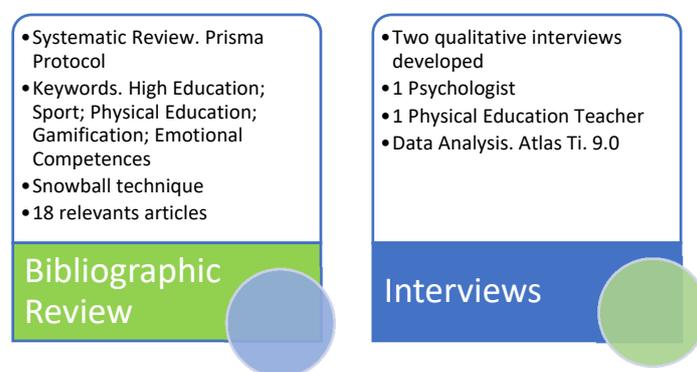


Figure 1. Material and methods used.

2.1. Bibliographic Review

Among the specialized scientific search engines used, there are different databases, such as SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Isi Web of Knowledge, which we accessed from the subscription that the University of Seville has through the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT). The following keywords were entered in these databases: emotional competencies, high education, sport, physical education and gamification; crossing them with the Boolean operator "AND" and eliminating repeated articles. The article selection process was carried out by following the guidelines of the PRISMA protocol [52]. This scoping review included any empirical, conceptual or peer-reviewed perspective. The selected studies explicitly address emotional competencies in higher-education students with physical education as a key factor, taking only those published between 2000 and 2021.

The eligibility criteria established that only peer-reviewed publications could be used, excluding those works that were end-of-degree projects, theses and divulgation documents. Articles were removed if they did not have at least an English-language table of contents.

During the literature review, two researchers (J.F.-G. and D.M.-R.) reviewed those articles, using the same criteria, to ensure the reliability of the inter-judge judgment; Cohen's Kappa coefficients were calculated for each of the exclusion criteria. For peer-reviewed publications, a result of 0.98 was obtained; for the consideration of papers as articles or other types of documentary sources, a kappa of 0.95 was obtained; finally, for the use of language, the coefficient was 1.00.

From this analysis, an extensive database of articles was obtained. Subsequently, combining the systematic review with the snowball technique, through the bibliography of these articles, other scientific articles and reference citations of interest were found, and they provided additional high-quality information for our proposal. In this way, 70 quality

documents were reviewed, totally or partially, of which 18 were directly used to carry out our study. In the end, our selection of studies left only those directly related to the topic in question.

2.2. Key Informant Interviews for Preparing the Didactic Proposal

Because this is an exploratory teaching proposal for a special population, students at the University Degree of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences, we opted for qualitative approaches in order to obtain the data that we needed. Specifically, we chose the qualitative interview with semi-structured open-ended questions, for which two interview scripts were developed: one for a psychologist expert in emotional education, and the other for the teacher of the subject where the didactic proposal would be carried out.

Due to the lack of studies on this subject [53], the interview had to be created ad hoc for this work, for which we used what we found in the previous literature review and especially the work of Bisquerra et al. [9,18,28,54], which ultimately are the ones that guide this didactic proposal.

Thus, the first thing we did was to create the relevant categories, from which we designed the interview, which was structured around 15 items, organized into five major modules related to Bisquerra's model [9], which were emotional vocabulary, relaxation techniques and connection with oneself, personal recognition, social skills and life skills. The estimated application time was 60 to 90 min.

The results obtained were submitted to the opinion of experts, as suggested by Reference [55], for which a psychologist, a specialist in physical education and a physical-education teacher with experience in the field of emotional education were present. These experts assigned two scores to each of the questions, answering the question to what extent they believed that the question was necessary or not necessary in an interview to obtain relevant information about the module analyzed, using a numerical scale of 1–4, where 1 is not relevant at all and 4 is totally relevant.

The results obtained were analyzed by independent evaluators in order to determine the validity of the results.

The collection procedure was performed by arranging a time with the key informants outside their usual working hours and space. An electronic sound recording system was used and relevant authorizations were collected, assuring respondents of confidentiality.

For this work, we used a sampling of unusual cases, for which the recommendations of Pineda et al. [56] were followed. In this manner, due to the particularity of the target group, the people interviewed were selected intentionally. Following the same logic, and to be able to reach the target population of experts in emotional education adequately and ensure that similar topics were addressed, the sampling used was also convenient and purposive [57]. However, the participants were encouraged to participate in the study with their ideas and opinions [58].

Once we had designed the didactic proposal to develop emotional competencies as a teaching innovation for higher-education students, we asked vital informants to give us their opinion on the work carried out. Finally, with the opinions of all informants and the material elaborated from the previous literature search and our knowledge, we proceeded to create the tools to be implemented in the classroom.

2.3. Procedure

The proposal was created for the subject of Physical Activity in the Natural Environment of the Degree in Sports Science at the University of Seville, and it will be implemented during the 2021/2022 academic year. This subject was chosen because of the teacher's sensitivity to the material and also because it is very suitable for this, as it combines two completely uncertain elements: on the one hand, the natural environment, which has its dynamics (seldom predictable); and on the other hand, the management of human groups that come to it with different objectives and perspectives. However, when they come together, experiences emerge in emotions that can be tremendously transforming

and educational if they are guided in the right way. The journey through the subject thus becomes a metaphor for learning. In order for students to be aware of the work they will be doing and how they will be assessed in relation to emotional competencies, including a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course, they will be informed on the first day of the course and will be given a consent form to ensure that the information obtained from them will be treated confidentially.

Following the tradition, the course begins with the presentation of the gamification project “Find your avatar”. This consists of a process of personal growth and self-knowledge through the use, as a dynamic tool, of the film *Avatar*. It is explained to the students that the subject is not based on acquiring knowledge, but rather competencies, among which emotional competencies will be of great importance. In this process, the students will evolve from “brown beings”, men and women disconnected from nature, to “blue beings or Na’Vis”, superior beings who are more conscious and connected to the harmony of nature.

From there, the work to be implemented on ECs is divided into several practical sessions coinciding with the 16 planned practical sessions of the subject. The first 10–15 min of each session is used for emotional work based on the different activities proposed. All the practical sessions will have two voluntary rituals in common, one at the beginning and one at the end:

- Beginning of the session: “Telling how we come”. Students will start the session in a circle to share their emotional state with the rest of the group when coming to the session. This will be performed voluntarily, and students will decide how much they want to share with the group. After sharing, they will be asked if they need anything from the group for the day. This ritual will evolve along with a process of learning emotional vocabulary, which will be approached progressively. Documents will be shared with them to expand their emotional vocabulary. It will not last more than 5 min.
- End of the session: “Reflections, evaluations and thanks”. At the end of the session, people will be thanked for some of the highlights of the session. Maximum 5 min.

Among these two everyday rituals, different activities will be carried out in each session to develop emotional competencies, always in a dynamic way and by the academic curriculum of the subject. Prior to and after the implementation of the emotional competencies of the development program, it is recommended to pass a scale to see the evolution of the students from beginning to end, so it is recommended to carry out an assessment by using a self-administered tool. Specifically, we propose to use the Questionnaire of Emotional Development of Adults (QDE-A) [59], which is composed of five dimensions: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, social competencies and competencies for life and well-being. These are directly related to the contents that we intend to work on and which will be listed, together with the development of the activities in the results section.

2.4. Data Analysis

In relation to the review of the documents used, the data from the primary studies were analyzed in a conventional manner. After a continuous evaluation of the results, the primary codes were recognized and classified into several groups according to their similarities.

For the analysis of the interviews, ATLAS.ti 9.0 was used, as it is a dynamic software that was created exclusively for the analysis of qualitative data with which the researchers are familiar.

3. Results

The activities that we are going to propose induce significant changes in which the students become aware of the need to change certain habits for their emotional benefits [24]. These, in addition, must be based on several premises, among which are being aware of the need to acquire CE, having sufficient motivation to achieve it, knowing how to obtain this

knowledge, putting into practice what is being learned and having the responsibility to persevere in one's learning [60]. All of this, as proposed by References [3,61], will lead to professional, academic and personal improvement.

In our proposal, we are committed to the Pedagogical Model, understood from the pedagogical dimension [62,63], converting the vital path of the human being into a space of knowledge in which one learns from emotion and not only from reason.

The contents to be worked on will be the following [64]:

- Content 1. Knowledge, identification, understanding and management of emotions.
- Content 2. Emotional language.
- Content 3. Mindfulness of the senses and our surroundings.
- Content 4. Intelligent optimism and positive emotions.
- Content 5. Critical analysis of negative emotions.
- Content 6. Resolution of intra- and interpersonal conflicts.
- Content 7. Development of social skills.

In order to make the relationship between the contents and the proposed activities are clear, please see the table below (Table 2).

Table 2. Relations between activities and contents.

Activity/Content	Knowledge, Identification, Understanding and Management of Emotions	Emotional Language	Mindfulness of the Senses and Our Surroundings	Intelligent Optimism. Positive Emotions	Critical Analysis of Negative Emotions	Resolution of Intra and Interpersonal Conflicts	Development of Social Skills
Sound walk		X	X				X
May I? Yes you can	X	X		X			X
Conscious joint mobility	X	X	X				
Searching for your partner							X
Movement in mirrors	X	X	X				X
Circle of traits						X	X
Guided meditation with background sounds			X				
Body scan	X	X					
Draw your silhouette	X	X					
Watching the video about the comfort zone	X			X	X		
Meditation with music			X				
Exercise of the number 8			X				
Finger meditation			X				
Gratitude chart				X	X		
Table of emotions					X	X	X
Conflict resolution	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The specific activities carried out during the sessions are explained below.

1. Sound walk (Contents: 2, 3 and 7)

Specific Objectives:

- Becoming aware of the sensations of our body in movement.
- Connecting with our breath to bring our mind to the present moment.

This musical activity encourages group identity and individual disinhibition. The group walks to the rhythm of music, occupying the whole space. On a signal from the teacher, everyone will stop. Then, on a voluntary and random basis, one student will start to move to the rhythm of the music, and the rest of the students will follow him/her until another student decides to stop, and then they all stop imitating him/her. When everyone is standing up again, another classmate will start a new movement.

2. May I? Yes you can (Contents: 1, 2, 4 and 7).

Specific Objectives:

- Get to know the names of the group members.
- Encourage a climate of disinhibition.
- Feeling the opportunity of a space in which to share.

The group forms a circle, and one of the pupils starts. He/she looks at a partner and asks, "May I?" If the partner answers, the student who asked the question goes to his/her partner's place, the other student looks for another person to ask, "May I?" Thus, the places will be exchanged. In a progressive way, different emotions can be introduced, for example, asking from sadness, surprise, anger, etc.

3. Conscious joint mobility (Contents: 1, 2 and 3).

Specific Objectives:

- Becoming aware of the sensations of our body in movement.
- Connecting with our breath to bring our mind to the present moment.

The group will form a circle and perform joint mobility from bottom to top. To do this, they will start standing with their hands on the sides of their hips, eyes closed and becoming aware of their surroundings and the sensations in their body. By connecting with their breathing, they will begin the circular movements of the ankle, becoming aware of how their joint acts, which muscles contract to achieve the movement and the sensations that this generates in their body. In this way, they will go through all the body joints.

4. Searching for your partner (Content: 7).

Specific Objectives:

- Learning to move our body in space.
- Becoming aware of our surroundings without using our sense of sight.
- To consciously connect with our partner.

The group is divided into pairs. Both partners have to blindfold each other and choose a sound between them. When the whole group is together, they have to find their partner by following the sound, by sharpening their hearing. This dynamic encourages conscious orientation with the use of other senses.

5. Movement in mirrors (Contents: 1, 2, 3 and 7).

Specific Objectives:

- Learning to move our body in space.
- Becoming aware of our surroundings without using our sense of sight.
- To consciously connect with our partner.

Blindfolded couples stand facing each other with their hands intertwined. They start to move on a signal and to the rhythm of relaxing music. In some cases, one partner leads the movement, and in others, the other does. This activity consists of accepting and putting yourself in the other person's place, without forcing the movement, and letting yourself go with the flow.

6. Circle of traits (Contents: 6 and 7).

Specific Objectives:

- Knowing our own traits.
- Knowing the traits of others.

Forming five groups and circles, one of each group will start in the middle. He/she will pass by one of his/her companions, looking him/her in the eyes and sharing a trait or characteristic that transmits that person and so on until he/she passes by all his/her companions. Then another will enter in the middle. Once they have all passed through the middle, the person who was in the first place will return and one by one will say the following to each of his or her companions: "I said you were..." and "What you do not know is that I am..." Then the person must share one of his/her traits. This dynamic shows us how each one moves within the conflict and encourages active listening.

7. Guided meditation with background sounds (Content: 3).

Specific Objectives:

- Be aware of the space around us.
- Identifying different sounds.
- Living in the present.

The students, as a group, in a comfortable position and with eyes closed, start to focus on their breathing. Using the breath as an anchor will bring the mind to the present moment. Once they are more relaxed, they will start to notice the sounds coming from outside and to imagine a tree in their mind, the mother tree of the film Avatar. Every thought that comes to them will be projected onto one of the leaves that will be carried with the wind.

8. Body scan (Contents: 1 and 2).

Specific Objectives:

- Becoming aware of our own body.
- Bringing attention to the present moment.
- Feeling the weight of our body.

The whole group will stand with feet shoulder width apart. Becoming aware of the present and the environment with the breath will bring attention to different body parts until the whole body is analyzed.

9. Draw your silhouette (Contents: 1 and 2).

Specific Objectives:

- Becoming aware of our own emotions.

Each person with a piece of paper and a pen draws a silhouette that represents him/her on a piece of paper. Then, using colored pencils, they paint in which areas of the body they notice the different emotions and in which color.

10. Watching the video about the comfort zone (Contents: 1, 4, 5).

Specific Objectives:

- Learning concepts related to the comfort zone.
- Visualize situations similar to those that occur to us.

The activity consists of watching the video "You dare to dream" by inKNOWation (<https://www.youtube.com/user/inKNOWation>, accessed on 18 November 2021), which can be found on YouTube. After watching the video, we will continue with a short reflection on the emotions and sensations that are awakened by stepping out of the comfort zone.

11. Meditation with music (Content: 3).

Specific Objectives:

- Bringing the mind to the here and now.
- Being aware of our body's sensations when listening to music.

Students will listen to a song set in 8D technology (fully immersive sound), and with their eyes closed, they will draw on a piece of paper what the music suggests to them. At the end of the audio, they will write down on that paper what their drawing conveys to them.

12. Exercise of the number eight (Content: 3).

Specific Objectives:

- Bringing the mind to the here and now.
- Knowing simple exercises to focus our attention on the present.

Students will form a triangle with the index finger and thumb of each hand and will be asked to draw perfect number eights in the air continuously, slowly and for five minutes. Throughout the activity, the emphasis will be on paying attention to making a correct number eight, which provokes a state of intense meditation.

13. Finger meditation (Content: 3).

Specific Objectives:

- Bringing the mind to the here and now.
- Knowing simple exercises to focus our attention on the present.

Students will take out three fingers on one hand and two fingers on the other, and at the pace that they can to do so, they will switch from three fingers on one hand to two fingers on the other. This will not be easy at first, but as they bring their attention to the present moment, they will increase the switching pace.

14. Gratitude chart (Contents: 4 and 5).

Specific Objective:

- Develop a sense of gratitude for oneself and others.

Students will create a chart; in the first column, they will write “things” they miss or do not have, and in the right column, why they are grateful for lacking the “things” in the first column. For example, in the first column, “I do not have internet”, and, in the second column, “I have more time to read”. This is a positive outlook exercise to train a positive attitude toward life (Table 3).

Table 3. Gratitude chart.

Gratitude Chart	
Things I miss/do not have . . .	Because of this, I am grateful for . . .
	I have home training alternatives
	I can catch up on my reading
I cannot train/go to the gym	I have more time to spend with my family
	I save that money
	I can prepare and learn more about my body

15. Table of emotions: causes and consequences. (Contents: 5, 6 and 7).

Specifics Objectives:

- Recognizing one’s own emotions.
- Study how to behave in different situations.

The activity consists of filling in a table for three different situations. The first row is filled in with a situation that seeks a negative emotion (anger, despair, etc.), the second row is filled in with a situation that seeks a positive emotion (joy, euphoria, etc.), the third situation is how a person feels when a friend him/her them about a problem that makes him/her has sad. Finally, they will answer of their feeling when they help them (Table 4).

Table 4. Emotions chart.

Emotions Chart			
Emotion (Negative) (Cause) Example	Emotion (Positive) Example	Empathizing with My Friend Example	Feeling by Helping Positively (Consequence) Example
Someone scratched my car and left. Anger.	The person who scratched my car contacted me to apologize and offered to repair the damage. Happiness.	Feeling bad and angry; also wanting to scratch the other person's car.	Good and useful. Asking if someone saw something.

Final Activity

The last activity of a practical nature is proposed through role-playing, in which students will effectively demonstrate whether they have integrated the emotions taught throughout the course.

16. Conflict resolution (Contents: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Specific Objective:

- Effectively resolve a conflict that could be a real one.
- Understand different types of communication.

A possible invented conflict that occurs when carrying out a physical activity in the natural environment will be presented, and the students will analyze, through role-playing, the most effective way to manage it, putting into practice everything they have learned by the end of the course.

Example of conflict: You and a colleague are guiding a group of secondary school children along a canyoning route. There are three water jumps, five meters maximum, which you have to rappel down. On the second jump, one of the students is paralyzed with fear and is unable to descend. He has half of his class who have already passed looking at him and the other half waiting for him to come down so that they can go down. You start to hear some mockery from your classmates. There is no other way down than the waterfall itself, and the student starts to get nervous. How would you resolve the conflict?

4. Conclusions

We understand that it is crucial to opt for and propose educational proposals such as the one described above. University students work specifically on emotional competencies, because, unfortunately, this is not taught in the classroom or planned in the teaching. It is essential for their future professional and personal development, making these students more competitive in the labor sector, where there is currently so much competition.

In the selection processes, they are looking for other competencies beyond those formally included in their degree, where emotional competencies become valuable. Being able to empathize with a colleague or situation, to work in a team, etc., is something that is not usually taught in the classroom, but which a person acquires over time outside the classroom, and that is what we have proposed, to provide these fundamental skills for life, which will later benefit a client who expects to be treated with empathy when contracting a professional service.

In this way, the proposal presented is based on the emotional intelligence model of Mayer and Salovey [11] (p. 10), which develops the four basic skills: "the ability to perceive, value and express emotions accurately; the ability to access and/or generate feelings that facilitate thinking; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions, promoting emotional and intellectual growth". In this way, we consider that, through this proposal, we have promoted the integral development of our students, who will acquire knowledge with which to properly manage their emotions that will result in greater personal and social well-being, for which different strategies will be used, such as those proposed by Saénz-López [63]: creating empathy with classmates

and the teacher, as well as about their possible circumstances, in the face of the different challenges that arise; and managing conflict and dialogue.

We therefore consider that the learning–teaching process should take place, as we have shown, from positive internal emotions, such as curiosity, admiration, security and joy, as Reference [64] (p. 17) develops in his Model of Conscious Emotional Bonding.

We also consider that, for this program to be most effective, it should take into account the following characteristics: that it should be positive, taking into account their strengths; that it should be tailored to each of them, being sensitive to their singularities; that it should be integrated with the environments where it is developed; that it should be collaborative among all participants, respecting confidentiality; that it should be voluntary; that it should allow participants the freedom to decide at any time the steps they want to take; that it should develop an integral safety net that should be adapted to the needs of each of them; that it should develop a comprehensive safety net that supports people’s physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, social, cultural, spiritual, environmental and economic well-being; that it should avoid forcing people into situations they have not chosen or for which they are not prepared; that it should reflect processes, especially with the gradual acquisition of competencies; and that it should take responsibility for themselves and their peers [65].

This work aimed to develop emotional competencies in university students to improve their personal and professional performance by using transversal activities based on Bisquerra’s five-block model [9], and we believe that this proposal will have achieved this objective by acquiring a better knowledge of our own emotions, the capacity to identify emotions in others to improve interpersonal relationships, the capacity of regulating our own emotions and the capacity to develop the ability to approach emotions that bring us closer to people and avoid emotions that distance us from them, as well as to adopt a positive attitude toward life. Moreover, participants will put into practice their emotional literacy throughout the different sessions, using new vocabulary and different ways to express their emotional states that they will be able to put into practice in their daily lives.

When we began this proposal, we noted the scarcity of studies that worked on emotional education in higher education, where, in 2021, it is still almost as scarce as it was a decade ago [66], which undoubtedly poses the first limitation of this work, to build a reliable and solid scientific proposal by using works that were not specific to higher education, as well as general references to emotional education and emotional intelligence, which, in turn, led us to another essential question: is it worth making this proposal or is it not worth making this proposal or is it a waste of time? In this respect, for us, the answer was simple, yes. In this regard, we have found numerous pieces of evidence that the development of this type of competence helps to provide more efficient responses to the problems posed on a daily basis [66,67], also providing a positive dimension that has an impact on the personal and social well-being of our students. Due to the aforementioned limitation, we have had to work with rigor and from a scientific perspective that we hope will produce positive results in the students when we apply it.

On the other hand, the greatest strength of this work lies in the experience in emotional education of the authors, who are pioneers in the implementation of this type of program, with vulnerable groups in Spain, and have tried to transfer their experience to the university context, making different adaptations for this purpose. This proposal aims to be implemented in February 2022, and, depending on its success, we consider that adapting it to other higher-education subjects could be easily achievable and necessary.

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